Information Rights Week, April 3-10

Department of Education

News Releases

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Kathleen Williams serves a media-savvy public, but when it comes to the Internet, this reference librarian says the technology often speaks louder than the content.

"We often remind patrons that anyone can easily mount a page on the Internet, with no editorial or peer reviewing of the information," says Ms. Williams, who works with the Halifax Regional Library. "It is just another information source and should be evaluated as you would any other."

Ms. Williams wants people to think critically about the information they find, whether online or not. It is this message -- Information Matters: Evaluate it before you use it -- that Nova Scotia's 75 libraries are promoting during this year's Information Rights Week, April 3-10.

Established in 1994 by the Canadian Library Association, Information Rights Week is intended to raise public awareness and provide information on such issues as the Internet, protection of privacy and access to government information.

In response to the increasing number of Nova Scotians connecting to the Internet, Nova Scotia's libraries are developing a web-awareness program to promote evaluation skills among library staff, parents and the general public.

"With the Internet playing a larger role in our daily lives, it is increasingly important to assess the reliability of the information we find," says Elizabeth Armstrong, acting provincial librarian. "Librarians are working to educate Internet users in determining accuracy, authenticity, objectivity and currency of web-based information."

The province's 75 libraries offer public access to the Internet through EDnet, the Department of Education's wide-area network. Through technology investments, all schools now have Internet access, and more than 150 community access sites are open across the province.

Never before has there been so much information so widely available to so many. No other information medium requires so much in the way of critical thinking skills either.

Ms. Williams says the onus is on the user to effectively evaluate and to think critically about what they are seeing.

"These are questions I always ask of every site. When was the page updated? Who authored the site? Is it a commercial site? A personal page? You'll be much wiser for it."

Libraries across Nova Scotia welcome their patrons' interest to learn more about making use of the Internet and other sources of information. The public is encouraged to contact a library during Information Rights Week or any time of the year.

FOR BROADCAST USE:

This is Information Rights Week, and Internet users are being reminded to think critically about the information they find on the World Wide Web.

Nova Scotia's 75 public libraries want to educate the growing number of Internet users on the reliability of web-based information.

The libraries are developing a web awareness program to promote evaluation skills among library staff, parents, and the general public.

To learn more about making use of the Internet and other sources of information, the public is encouraged to contact a library.

Public access to the Internet is now available at all of the province's libraries.

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